



25 February 2014

The Research Director
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Submission No. 016
25 February 2014
11.1.15

Dear Committee Members,

RE: Water Supply Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

I am writing to put forward my submission for the Water Supply Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 (the Bill). I am appalled that the Queensland Government is potentially allowing this Bill to be put through. This Bill proposes to deregulate the installation of water meters and allow unlicensed persons to carry out such work; **this cannot and must not proceed.**

The plumbing industry is a licensed industry for a reason. Defective work performed within the water or sanitary systems can have catastrophic and dangerous results to the health and wellbeing of the community and therefore only appropriately trained and licensed plumbers should be allowed to install, maintain and repair water meters.

We are constantly being asked as an industry for examples of the Health of our community being compromised, that is to a great degree not possible as our highly trained Plumbing tradesman and Regulatory Authority prevent this occurring. If you need proof of this go to countries in our region or in the wider world and it can be seen what happens when there are no trained Plumbers and no regulatory Authority. I recently attended the World Plumbing conference in New Delhi where when talking to the local people they had no understanding of what a plumber was or what we did, but when looking at their country where there is a high infant mortality rate due to water borne disease and where 60% of the population does not have access to clean drinking water you can understand this. The World Health Organisation and the Medical Profession recognise the large part Plumbing Trade play in maintaining the health and quality of life within our communities. PLUMBERS ARE THE MOST, LEAST APPECIATED PART OF OUR SOCIETY CONSIDERING THE IMPORTANT PART WE PLAY IN ITS HEALTH AND WELL BEING. We are constantly being made to defend our trade against uninformed vested interest who have no understanding of the important work we do.

This proposed change to the plumbing legislation will permit unskilled, unlicensed persons to enter into my trade with a fraction of the skills I am required to hold and allow them to compete with my business. Since the GFC my Business as a matter of survival in these tough economic times has had to engage in working for the Water Authorities. QUU has recently tendered out the installation of water meters and sewerage connections with the aim to engage one contractor to carry out this work. This Tender was won by Thiess Contractors a large multi-national company. Effectively all the small contractors are will no longer be able to contract directly with the developers with regards to carrying out this work, they propose to use unskilled, unlicensed persons will also effectively be taking food out of my family's and employees mouths in order for the water supplier and big business to obtain a higher annual turnover by keeping work in-house and not outsourcing. Why is big business able to profit at the detriment of small business?

As a licensed plumber, I had to undertake a four year apprenticeship to obtain my licence and develop a sound understanding of the intricacies of the trade. Anything less than a Certificate III in Plumbing (gained through an intensive four year apprenticeship) would not provide the relevant skills and knowledge to be achieved to competently and successfully perform plumbing work, and the installation, maintenance and repair of water meters is plumbing work.

My fear is that water meters are just the beginning. I believe that if this Bill becomes legislation, it won't stop there. Next the water service providers will want to work on sub-meters and have access onto the property and once there, where will it stop? If the Government is bending to the will of big business now, it won't stop in the future. What does this mean for my small business, my family and employees, given that this country is primarily run on small business? I see this legislation change resulting in the eventual deregulation of the

plumbing industry all together. Small business produces better trained trade's people than big business will ever produce and our trade's people are more highly skilled as proved during the recent mining boom where our trades were stripped tradesmen to fill a shortfall in an industry that makes no investment in providing in long term training.

The Government argues that they are doing this for red tape reduction. Yet, with the claim that there will be "no net reduction in employment", there will be plenty of additional red tape to transfer this task from plumbers who already do the work, to water service workers that would need training, compliance measures and management. Again, this Bill is just Government bowing to big business and creating additional red tape. If the Government wants to reduce red tape have look at the documents and processes required to carry out the work e.g. QUU work permit process that can take from 10 days to 30 days working days to process then another 10 days working days to book a inspector to inspect the work (and hope he turns up when booked)

I am disgusted with the Government and the fact they would consider this legislative change which will harm my trade and small business. You are once again neglecting your key constituents and pandering to big business. If this bill goes through, you have had your last vote from me or my family.

Sincerely,

Dennis Yarrow
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